Messy Moments

By Linda Mooney

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

I recently arrived at the office ready to tackle my long task list. Within two hours I received three phone calls and an email from companies I do business with, only to find out that some of the things I thought were finished were not. In all three cases mistakes made by others created more work for me. I spent most of my day fixing problems and never got to my well organized list.

After leaving work, I drove my teenage daughter to the alteration shop to pick up her prom dress. Even though we showed up at the scheduled time the dress had not been touched and was still on the hanger where we dropped it off two weeks earlier. With less than 48 hours before prom, the seamstress admitted she had forgotten to do it.

Heading home with my frustrated daughter, I grumbled that the shop was overpriced. I said that I was not going to pay the full amount and I couldn’t help but think how my well-planned day had been derailed by the mistakes of others. In my frustration I was reminded of an event from five years earlier.

After being rushed to the Emergency Room and diagnosed with kidney stones, my doctor requested a follow-up CAT Scan to check my remaining kidney stones. I was amazed at how much difficulty I had scheduling the scan. The person who was supposed to call me back didn’t. Some of my contact information was lost. Then I was told I should try and schedule with someone else.

Although the doctor requested the scan in December, I finally arrived at the clinic in March. My information from the doctor’s office was incorrect and that delayed the scan another 30 minutes. Some CAT scans require an IV for more detail and others do not. Kidney stones do not require an IV, but since my information was entered incorrectly in the system they did the more detailed scan.

Later in the day, I learned that my kidney stones looked fine but the CAT Scan showed my appendix was in bad shape and they were concerned it would burst. What I thought was stomach flu a few weeks earlier was actually appendicitis.

They needed to take my appendix out right away. Without the more detailed scan they probably would not have found it. Within a few days my appendix was out and after a few weeks I was good as new. I was so grateful for the mistakes made along the way.

It was important for me to learn that frustrating mistakes can be opportunities for good things to happen in the Lord. It helps us to rely on the Lord and experience his victory even in those messy moments. We turn to him in prayer and he helps us put things in perspective. In those moments, I am reminded of the many mistakes I make and how merciful the Lord and others are to me. I am called on to show that same mercy to others.

Four hours after we left the alteration shop, my daughter and I returned. The dress had been altered beautifully and I expressed my appreciation to the weary seamstress for staying until 8:30 pm. I complimented her work and paid her full price. I was grateful for this moment and opportunity to teach my daughter how to trust the Lord and be kind to others when they make mistakes.

If you want a 31-hour work week, move to Paris. Work is a part of life—and often takes up more than 31 hours a week for those who live and work in America. The key is to make sure work isn’t your whole life.

We were designed for work to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Work is much less stressful and demanding for those who realize “we are his workmanship” and we’re just doing the work he has called us to do. Then it isn’t work at all—it’s who we are and what we do.

Another element of our lives is family. After loving God, caring for your spouse (if married) and your children, requires your utmost attention. Singles play valued family roles by honoring their mothers and fathers, as well as caring for the larger church family.

We must remember God’s prescription for work life and family—six days of work and one day of rest. Scientific studies highlight the physical stress that is caused by working seven days a week without a day of rest. Pursue hobbies, enjoy your friends, but be sure to honor his day!

Avoir un été béni. (Have a blessed summer.)

Linda Mooney is an Administrative Associate at The Healy Group. She and her husband Patrick have one daughter and live in South Bend, IN. She can be reached at Linda.mooney@sbcglobal.net.
**Saying Yes to More**  
**By**  
John Xenakis

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness! (Matthew 25:21)

When I was single, I had time and flexibility to talk with friends, read, learn, work, and serve. I remember my youthful energy at work, willing to stay late and take on more. This time was well spent, but my heart was open for something more. The Lord gave me more when I said Yes to marriage. The Lord gave me more when I said Yes to children. Then the Lord gave me more responsibility at work, year after year. The Lord gave my family more when I said Yes to a fixer-upper house in our target neighborhood. I’m not trying to boast—the Lord is the subject of all these sentences, and I am the object. Just as the Lord gives more talents to his servants, so too does he continue to give more to us.

With the rich life that Christ gives us, now he is asking for more of me. And, it’s a big temptation for me to say, “Thanks, I’m good now. No more Lord. With all my work and making sure I have enough time with the family, and renovating the house, and all our Christian responsibilities, I can’t do more.” I wonder if the servant was tempted to say to his master, “More talents? Wait, can I please get a breather…?” But instead of falling into this temptation, the Lord asks us to share in his happiness. In prayer, the Holy Spirit knows exactly how to delight in us, and encourage us so that we can keep asking the Lord, “What’s next? Show me what else I can do.”

Lord, help me to keep an open heart and mind to all that you ask of me.

Consider how the Holy Spirit has encouraged you to answer the Lord’s call in your life.

How have you responded when you thought the Lord was asking for more than you thought you could deliver?

John Xenakis lives in South Bend and has worked with The People of Praise Christian Community for 12 years in the accounting office, and is now the director of finance at LaSalle Company. He and his wife, Karen, have three children under five. He can be reached at xenakis.john@gmail.com.

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Culture of Family at Work  By Carrie Urbanski

Later during evening prayer time, my preschool daughter, who is abundantly joyful, prayed for the grumpy person to be happy. Periodically over the next several months, my daughter continued this prayer. Both my husband’s and daughter’s response touched me and opened my heart to greater mercy for people I encountered.

Work and family are not callings in conflict with each other, rather they move in tandem and each vocation can enrich the other. Sharing experiences from work with our children opens their eyes to a bigger world and to broader understanding of God’s love. We can demonstrate how faith permeates all facets of our life and the fruit of turning to the Lord throughout the day and being observant to his blessings.

PRAY:

Father, thank you for my family and for my work. Help me to see blessings in these callings each day.

REFLECT:

Can you think of times when your work life has been enriched through your family or vice versa?

DISCUSS:

How can I deepen relationships and support of colleagues?

Discerning the Lord’s Will  By John Xenakis

I had been working for People of Praise for 11 years, so I was surprised when my boss asked me to pray about working for our related company, the LaSalle Company. Karen and I were praying and discerning this big change for our family. It slowly became clear to me there were some real advantages to this job, and it felt like the Lord was calling me on a new great work with him.

My biggest and final obstacle however, was going from a commute that was a two-minute walk to a 20-minute drive. I wouldn’t be able to come home from work to eat lunch every day, but God’s work in his Kingdom is important as well. I needed to listen to Jesus.

PRAY:

Thank you, Lord for giving me opportunities to grow in unexpected ways.

REFLECT:

Think of a time when you approached someone close to you with adverse news and they surprised you with a welcome solution.

DISCUSS:

Have you been in a position where you had to give up something small to gain something bigger? How did you react?
Moments that Matter

By Carrie Urbanski

Let your gentleness be evident to all. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6-7)

I exited a meeting and jogged from my office to the car, jumped in and glanced at the clock. If I got green lights and moved quickly, I might get to preschool pick up on time. As I backed out I recognized that my whole body was tense. In the next moment, I realized that my tension was a choice. Stress would not get me there quicker, but would surely lead to annoyance with other drivers and arrival with a less joyful attitude.

I took a deep breath, intentionally relaxed my body, and was surprised by how my perspective changed with that action. It was as though I could see more clearly my true and blessed reality. Rather than being focused on red lights, I was able to reflect on blessings of the work day and my children, which was a perfect mental transition for the next phase of my day. I was filled with peace and felt the joy of the Lord.

Our Father has used this situation to begin showing me how I can live and love better. Deliverables, tight timelines, multiple activities and carpools are part of family and work life. Life will be busy, but need not be harried. When I choose peace, I’m less distracted, I’m quicker to see blessings rather than irritations, and I’m able to relate to people with more interest and joy. Beginning the day with prayer and taking moments to pause and reflect throughout the day help me achieve this.

In God’s kingdom, it is not just the task or end goal that is relevant. He calls us to share his love through all that we do. There are opportunities for love while driving kids to soccer practice and while completing work projects. We just need to keep our mind and heart in peace and focused on the Lord.

PRAY:

Lord, bless me today with your peace, that I may better share your love and joy with my family, coworkers and all those I encounter.

REFLECT:

Consider how you handle busy days. Do you experience and share God’s joy on those days?

DISCUSS:

What actions could you take to help bring peace to your day?

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Building on last year’s success, the conference will be filled with inspiring lightning talks, Christ at Work stories, useful workshops, informative panel discussions, and fellowship with coworkers in Christ.

**Friday, October 4**
In the morning, we’re excited to unveil a new communications campaign to reach the next generation.

Join us in the afternoon for a "Coworkers in Christ Gathering" with the local Christian community.

**Saturday, October 5**
Features talks and workshops, including a special “Life in the Holy Spirit” session to explore his role in our lives.

There will be opportunities to pray for a greater release of the Spirit for each of us.

“Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” — MATTHEW 5:16
Make the light of Christ shine brighter in your workplace by learning helpful insights and acquiring new resources for bolstering small groups. As we reach new audiences in new ways, this is an opportunity to experience first-hand the latest development in revitalizing our efforts to engage more people in our mission.

To register online, visit our 2019 Annual Conference page and select register online: www.cicintl.org/conf19

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Registration closes on October 2, 2019. Discounted Room Rate at Embassy Suites offered until September 17, 2019.

Fee includes Friday and Saturday lunches, the Lord’s Day dinner on Saturday, and all conference materials.

Hotel reservations info:

*Special rates have been negotiated with Embassy Suites Bloomington. The rate is $149 for single or double occupancy, $159 for a triple and $169 for a quad. This includes a breakfast buffet for hotel registered guests.

To make a reservation, call 952-884-4811 or 1-800-Embassy and request CIC rate, or go online to: https://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/M/MSPWEES-CIC-20191002/index.jhtml

Mail completed registration form (include payment if paying by check) to CIC Office: 7515 Lee Highway, Falls Church, VA 22042
When I graduated in 2013 there were four law schools in the Twin Cities, now there are only three. The market couldn’t support the nearly 800 lawyers graduating every year, so not only were you concerned about academics, but you were greatly concerned about the extracurricular activities you could put on your resume. These were all things that took up a great deal of my time and put an intense strain on me. It was perhaps the first instance where I felt like I had to really lean in to my faith because there were times where it just felt overwhelming.

Even though I knew it would ultimately come to an end, I still had to pray for guidance and strength each day to endure the trial.

There were many trials during law school. Trying to get a summer clerkship your second year is a major concern for lawyers and I had over 20 interviews in pursuit of a position. When I finally got a clerkship, I thought for sure I would have the opportunity to work there following law school.

A couple of months before graduation I learned that there wouldn’t be a full-time opening for me and that they couldn’t take me on board. That was devastating and I had to scramble to try and find something. Ultimately I secured a clerkship almost 200 miles from my hometown. It was a desperate time for me and I needed to gain the skills from the clerkship, so that’s ultimately where I went.

It was a rather bleak point in my life. However, the people in the area were excellent. I highly respected the judge I clerked for and I adored my coworkers. But I was making a modest salary and I had nearly $200,000 in law school and college debt. I didn’t see the Lord’s plan. I felt like the Lord had delivered me up there and given me this opportunity, but I really wanted to get home. I wanted to return to my family and be present for my mother who was single at that time.

So once again I was desperately crying out to the Lord, “Please show me, I’m a very thick-headed person, you have to show me, what’s the next step?”

Maybe it wasn’t on the timeline I wanted, but the Lord delivered on both of those prayers. I had a friend at the firm I now work at who mentioned that there was an opening. As it happened, this firm was located in the same town where I grew up. It was surreal because I had looked all across the state, and even looked out of state for a position and didn’t know where I would end up. For the Lord to place me right back home, where I so strongly desired to be, was unbelievable.

It took me a couple of years, with serious and honest reflection about where I had been, starting from my childhood. You would expect someone in my position, with my background and family situation to be at this stage of their life and just thinking about this whole life experience of 30 years, it really moved me and opened my eyes to see that God has always been faithful to me.

Bryan Huntington was interviewed for a Nine to Five Podcast. To listen to the full interview go to bit.ly/UnfailingFaithfulness
Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. (2 Corinthians 9:13)

After a number of decades working as an electrician, I was asked to join a small vocational school as an instructor. I lacked confidence and was reluctant to accept. I had no formal training as an instructor and being in my late sixties, I knew it would be a big change moving from the field to the classroom. After the third time I was asked, I decided to seriously discern if this is what the Lord wanted.

It was, and I began a difficult journey to become an electrical instructor. I was experienced in wiring procedures and use of the national code, but unsure of how to teach it in the classroom. The materials I received were minimal. I was anxious that my lack of teaching experience would be apparent. Much of my knowledge came from observing others, especially my father, asking questions and learning code.

I always had a desire to teach others the trade. I quickly learned that taking my students to actual construction sites, and giving “on the job training” enabled me to share the wiring procedures I understood well. My lab is in actual houses, gaining real wiring experience. I seek to empower my students to engage in meaningful work and not only teach my students electrical procedures, but also how to be men of integrity.

The Working for Our Father series stresses that “through commerce the needs of all will be met.” I want my students to understand, appreciate, and participate in the gift of good work and commerce. I seek to teach them the skills necessary to be good employees so they can get and keep a job.

Show up for work. Work hard. Learn the trade. Do your best every day. By teaching my students to overcome poor work habits and grow in integrity, they too can participate in the valuable work as a means of meeting their material, personal, and even spiritual needs. I teach them that success won’t all come at once. We must play the long game; have the long vision. I also know that along the way they will need help, so I must be patient.

One of my students asked me why I teach. He was a little surprised that at 71, I am still working. I told him it’s because God told me to do it. I want to be obedient to that call. I hope that my students learn from my efforts to model right speech, respect, good work habits, and values. Jesus is my model. He worked together with his men. He taught them what he knew by his actions and wisdom. Jesus was the perfect example of Working for Our Father. I hope I am as well.

Jim Ingram lives in Burnsville, MN, with his wife Brenda. He works as a part-time electrician instructor for Midway Vo-Tech in a program called “jail to journeyman.”

Conduct a Working for Our Father series. Four videos and discussion guides cover:

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- Triumphant Over Toil, Trials, and Temptations
- Aligning Your Career to God’s Mission
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UNITING CHRISTIANS TO SHINE BRIGHT

At the Annual Conference in October, we’ll introduce attendees to our new program—WorkLight—to unite Christians to be Christ at work. We’ve created this new identity to reach new audiences and draw Christians together to be the light of Christ.

“For once you were full of darkness, but now you have the light of the Lord. So, live as people of the light.” (Ephesians 4:8)

On July 1, we’re releasing a new video to introduce WorkLight at WorkLight.org. All new content, media, and communications will use this name. Chapters will continue to be organized under the name Christians in Commerce.

Let’s join together to use WorkLight to spark a movement of the Holy Spirit by:

• Uniting Christians across traditions, occupations, and positions.
• Providing practical, on-demand resources that are adaptable and readily available.
• Assisting Christians in forming small groups to be coworkers in Christ.

It is important to come together as the body of Christ across traditions, occupations, backgrounds, age and gender.

The key ingredient in all materials is personal stories woven into our workday reflections, newsletters, videos, and online resources. They give living examples of the life of Christ in action.

We need God’s direction, grace, and strength. And, our workplaces need the gifts, talents, experiences, perspectives, and diversity that the Spirit draws together in the body of Christ.

Today’s technology allows us to proclaim this message in new ways. The name WorkLight reflects our vision, to bring the light of Christ to our fellow workers, across all types of industries and occupations.

WorkLight will deliver a wide variety of materials that can be used in a variety of ways and with different groupings of people.

WorkLight materials enable Christians to create small groups to equip and strengthen each other, enabling them to align their occupations with God’s mission. Discovering greater meaning and purpose, they will experience:

• More joy in their work as they connect with other Christians for support and encouragement.
• Greater personal integrity as God’s truth influences their work life.
• Personal encouragement fueled by first-hand accounts and practical insights.
• And, empowerment to be Christ at work.

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:16)

Our hope is that WorkLight and these materials will unite Christians for building the kingdom of God in the workplace. Our workplaces are filled with hungry and thirsty coworkers for the life of Christ. WorkLight will enable us to support and strengthen others to shine bright and light the darkness. Let it spark the movement of the Holy Spirit we desire.

Join us at the October conference to hear and see more.
CHRISTIANS IN COMMERCE PRAYER

Father,
You are my Lord and Creator.
You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit:
That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;
That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people.
A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;
That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and possessions you have given me.
A stewardship that serves, is generous, and brings honor to your name;
That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce.
A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.
Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.
Amen

VISION: Being Christ in the workplace
MISSION: To encourage and equip Christians to be God’s presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence
VALUES: Christians in Commerce is an ecumenical organization committed to:
• Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
• Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
• Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
• Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”
Galatians 2:20